



TAKING OUT THE TRASH

March 23, 2004

How 'Bout Them Apples?

The South Boston Action Center recently established an “alcohol-free zone” at the annual St. Patrick’s Day Parade. The center planned to offer neon-green T-shirts, provide face painting and snacks, and conduct “gentle interventions” to anyone exhibiting drunken behavior in the zone. One Southie resident saw the effort as futile saying: “Forget about it. It’s never going to work. This is South Boston, sweetheart. There’s a bar every block.” What’s the federal connection? The center’s parent organization, the South Boston Collaborative Advisory Network, received a \$500,000 federal grant in 2003 to change the community’s approach to alcohol and reverse long-standing drinking traditions. (Donnovan Slack and Jessica Bennett, “For St. Patrick’s Parade, a Dry Patch?” *The Boston Globe*, March 20, 2004)

Not Your Standard Deduction

According to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), more than 80,000 tax returns were filed in 2001 seeking tax credits totaling \$2.7 billion for slave reparations. Such tax credits do not exist under current law. Unfortunately, more than \$30 million was mistakenly paid out over a similar time period. The practice returned once again to the IRS’s 2004 list of “Dirty Dozen” tax scams after once topping the charts at #1 in 2002. One individual was recently caught who prepared tax returns for his daughter and several others and claimed more than \$3.6 million in reparations. (“Father, Daughter Get Jail Terms for Claiming Fake Slavery Reparations on Tax Return,” *Associated Press*, October 23, 2003)

Thank You, Mr. President!

In an effort to downsize the federal government, President Bush’s FY05 budget proposed to terminate 65 duplicative and ineffective programs that would save taxpayers billions this year. One of the programs, the Advanced Technology Program (ATP), provides matching grants to corporations for research in electronics and biotechnology. According to the Heritage Foundation, five companies (IBM, General Electric, General Motors, 3M, and Motorola) have received 21% of the program’s benefits since 1990. In addition, 40 *Fortune* 500 companies – with combined revenues of \$1 trillion and profits of \$11 billion in 2002 – have received 40% of ATP benefits. The Congressional Budget Office also targeted this program for termination. It estimated that such action would allow taxpayers to reap the benefits of \$2 billion in savings over ten years. (“Budget Options,” CBO, March 2003; Brian Riedl, “The Advanced Technology Program: Time to End this Corporate Welfare Handout,” *Heritage Foundation*, July 15, 2003)

Remember the \$800,000 Outhouse?

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies recently told the National Parks Service (NPS) to ground its foreign travel plans for FY05. Representatives Charles Taylor and Norman Dicks recently sent a letter to the NPS pointing to the \$44 million spent in FY03 on travel, including 215 foreign trips to China, South America, Africa, France, Italy, and other countries. Their letter stated that, “with the parks facing operations shortfalls, there are clear choices that need to be made.” The letter went on to emphasize that any technical expertise needing to be dispensed to developing countries could be more appropriately and efficiently done via teleconferencing and other means of automated communications.

The Washington Waste Watchers:

A Congressional Working Group to Combat Waste, Fraud, and Abuse

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